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This is the beginning of a discussion, an open and ongoing dialogue, if you please. And we do aim to please while we play.

We think it's right and good to wonder why – to ask pointed questions of others as well as ourselves.

We think it's necessary to envision a different way, to hope for something better, and to work together toward these ends.

We believe in the constructive and destructive powers of language.

We witness how language shapes our reality, and how it bends and distorts it.

We promote rigorous, good faith critique, intending to pique (y)our shared interests.

We practice equitable access while using clear and understandable language.

The world is upon us. Let's flip the script, one word at a time. Let's have conversations that create anew while they tear down built-up barriers and destroy old guards. We intend to sharpen our linguistic skills by doing. We're here to learn and to practice, and goddamn do we ever mean to have fun while doing serious work.

Samə Pagə is a project mainly comprised of the papers we wish we were writing. So we're gonna write 'em. Put simply, it's an anti-journal focused on analyzing and flattening disparities in and through applied linguistics. A zine for the language-attuned punk in you, an academic(ish) journal minus the gatekeeping for those who need help getting over themselves. But it's much more than that, too - it's a relationship. Nay, a set of overlapping relationships among writers, editors and readers; between students and faculty; between academe and local communities. We aren't waiting around to be told what to do and how to do it. It's time to move.

testimonio

academia

"Testimonio insists that ~~literature~~ be purposeful and give people access to address their own lives through

writing or doodling or what have you
~~story~~ In his text, *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth*, John Beverly defines testimonio:

The dominant formal aspect of the *testimonio* is that voice which speaks to the reader in the form of an "I" that demands to be recognized, that wants or needs to stake a claim on our attention.

This presence of the voice, which we are meant to experience as the voice of a real rather than

abstracted

~~fictional~~ person, is the mark of a desire not to

be silenced or defeated, to impose oneself on an

institution of power like ~~literature~~ academia from the

position of the excluded or the marginal (Beverly

2004: 76-7)

or the peripheral
or the pre-service
or the non-traditional

In a sense, we can understand *testimonio* as ~~literature~~ inquiry that [speaks truth and speaks back at institutions] that resists institutional discourse limit and harm [women of color and their communities]"

(Trujillo, 2013, p. 63; emphasis mine)

people /
students /
thinkers /
ponderers /
dreamers

by S. M.

I have drawn on Trujillo & Beverly's words because they evince the ideological core values that I envision for saməpəgə. As the repurposed quote on the previous page suggests, the genre known as *testimonio* centers on the self as an experiencing presence, one whose perspective asserts itself to maintain the multidirectional exchange of influence that ought to be a key component of academia (& knowledge-production more generally). Akin to a manifesto, *testimonio* asks: What are my experiences? & How do they relate to the bigger ideas? [that matter to me and/or that I am interested in].

I evoke these concepts to frame the call-to-action we present with this project/product: do tell us what language/linguistics/education/eudaimonia/voice/_____ mean(s) to you. and tell us in the medium and language variety and register you feel most comfortable in (although don't feel committed to one or another - blending is a-okay). If it's not analog enough to be printed in this format, there are other fine people doing other cool projects in the LAF collective more generally (see page) that would love to learn what you have to say.

From a different angle, the following excerpt from Heller (1999) captures well what I hope this zine (aka anti-journal) will become. After presenting her [altered] quote, I conclude with a ^{outline - language} mind map that reflects on her question: **what do our concerns have in common?** With a shared point of experience from which to work, I frame her words in the third-person plural instead of the first singular:

↓
(i.e. as students enrolled in a program together,
as students / scholars of linguistics,
as users / creators / changers of language)

^{We}
~~"I have~~ deliberately encouraged ^{our} ~~all three~~ authors

to adopt a more personalized stance than is common in academic writing, and I have tried to follow suit. The main reason for this is that one of my goals is to situate ourselves, as sociolinguists, and **to explore our specific perspectives and experiences as they are informed by our positioning** (or vice versa). This is centrally about voice, and adopting a distant stance makes it harder, I think, to be clear about the position from which we speak. But others may disagree.

^{This Zine will be}
~~The set of papers will close with~~ an attempt on my

part to focus on **what our concerns collectively have in common, and an invitation for a response from the community.** My intent is certainly not to lay down any prescriptions, but rather to **create a forum where those of us who share experiences and questions can exchange ideas and opinions,** as a way of breaking through the silence which periodically shrouds public discussion of difficult issues,"

^{language-related & otherwise.}

(Heller, 1999, p. 262; emphasis mine)

What do our concerns have in common?

applying what we're learning by doing

feeling like what we're doing matters [to people outside of ossified ivory circles] & that's it's gonna matter [to us now and to others in the future]

engaging with the present moment/situation and the opportunities it presents

feeling that we're capable of working together & exchanging ideas that aren't always aligned

honest, sincere, & open discourse

feeling a sense of connection

to one another

to the material we're learning

to the wider field

to our communities

improving "where we work, play, and pray"

(feeling like we have spaces and communities, or finding/building new ones if we do not)

we want to contribute to our communities, whatever that means to us / ends up meaning to us

taking care of each other

* in closing, we can't [and shouldn't] pretend that our presence doesn't have an impact. Embrace and embody the fact that your presence makes a difference/impact/... take up space! *



Zhang Huan, **To Raise the Water Level in a Fishpond**, 1997, documentation of performance at Nanmofang fishpond, Beijing, 1997. Performers: Zhang Huan, workers and fishermen.

References

Heller, M. (1999). Sociolinguistics and public debate: Ebonics, language revival, "la qualité de la langue" and more: What do we have to say about the language debates of our time?. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3(2), 260-266.]

Trujillo, P. M. (2013). Feminisms. In S. Bost & F. R. Aparicio (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature* (55-66). New York: Routledge.

perhaps...

As students, do we expect to sit back and wait for our institutions to make us into something? Is it the position of the institution to do everything for us while we passively go through the motions for this piece of paper, this title? Do we suddenly become linguists and educators on the day we receive our degrees? Is it mere employability that we seek; is that why we are in school? What makes one employable? Is it the title we claim, or that is bestowed upon us from some prestigious university or organization, that assures one a job? Must we demand that they cater to us and give us everything we need? Why should we try to get the things we need in life from any institution? Is that what institutions are there for?

I want to argue against these ideas. I want to imagine a different type of institution, a different relationship between students and professors. I want to stop thinking that we need permission from anyone or anything to do what we want with our lives.

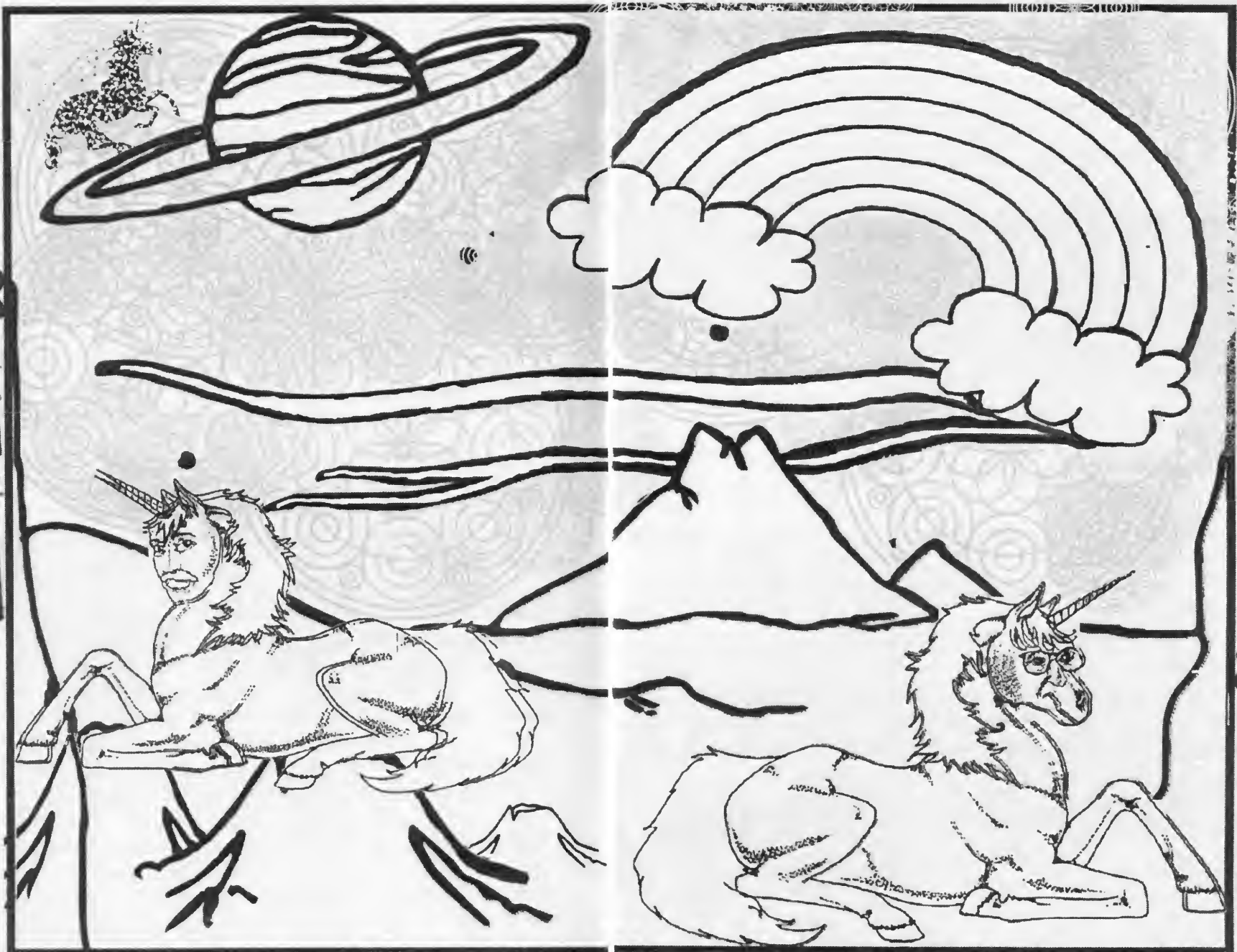
Perhaps our institutions have failed us in that respect. Perhaps our government has failed us. Perhaps the companies where we try to secure our jobs and our futures, the various businesses all out just to make a buck from us, they have all failed us. Perhaps we don't have to fail each other. Perhaps we can imagine a better way, but we must not stop there.

What if we challenge ourselves and challenge each other to go out and create the lives that we want to live. create our own communities. create the world in which we want to live? What if we work together, for ourselves, and for each other? What if we need not fear our peers, nor enter into competition with them? What if we simply need to dream, to have vision, to dare to want something more, to have passion, and to let that out into the world? What if we no longer feel compelled to keep an apathetic face when our hearts are crying out for expression?

We should not be afraid to be ourselves, to demonstrate what we're capable of, and to own what we produce. We will not be ashamed to make mistakes, to dream. to envision and enact our lives. We will look inward at our lives as we make our art and create ourselves, our communities, and our world outwardly.

by L P

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ABSTRACT rad▽libs

by You.

In recent years, much research has been devoted to the construction of _____.

NOUN

_____ists agree that _____.

NOUN

ADJECTIVE

_____ is an interesting new topic in the field of _____ography, and researchers

NOUN

PREFIX

concur. In fact, few would disagree with the analysis of _____, which embodies the robust principles of _____.

UNNECESSARY NOMINALIZATION

ADJECTIVE

NOUN

Locating itself within _____ approaches to

ADJECTIVE

_____ and within a growing body of

FIELD OF STUDY

literature on _____, the current study

NOUN

analyzes _____. Recent advances in

NOUN (COUNT OR PLURAL NOUN)

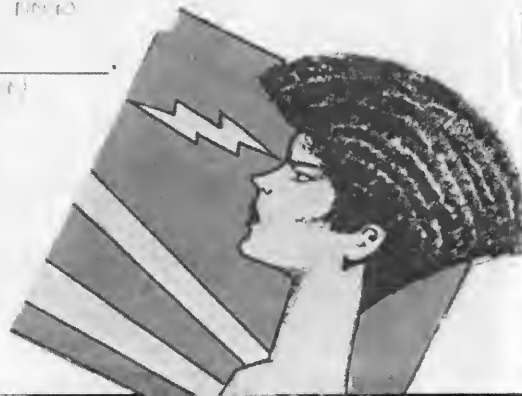
_____ and _____ offer a viable

NOUN

VERB

alternative to _____.

VERB



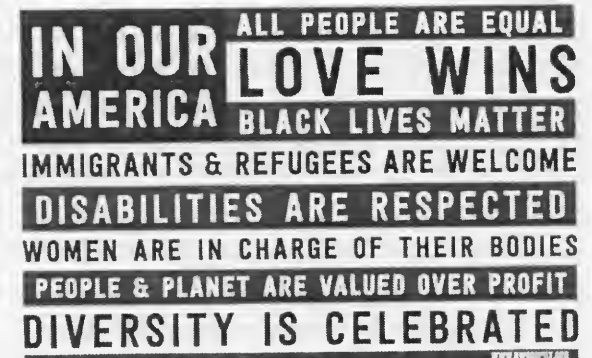
ba · nalysis

If your nation was founded as a settler-colonial project on the backs of slave labor, maybe go easy on the patriotism: Reading between the stars & stripes on the “In Our America” signage

If you live in Portland and have a pulse, then you’ve seen this sign sticking up on your neighbor’s lawn, printed on someone’s t-shirt or pinned as a button to a denim vest. There’s even a pair of full-sized billboards next to one another in the Brooklyn neighborhood on Powell Blvd with a ginormous

version splashed across one and a related “we welcome” message of purported openness on the other. In short, this image is fucking e v e r y w h e r e – if it’s not ubiquitous then ubiquity doesn’t mean what I think it means.

In this article I will examine multiple aspects of this recent phenomenon. I will begin with its short history before describing the context from which it emerges. Then I will analyze lexical and design choices made by its creators along with other publicly available discourse from them. For the sake of brevity, not all that is on the sign will be addressed, focusing on what I think to



¹ Brettman, A. (2016, December 07). Social values mix with American flag in Portland friends' post-election sign. The Oregonian. http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2016/12/social_values_mix_with_america.html

² After the infamous ‘nasty woman’ comment, an HRC supporter purchased the domain nastywomengetshitdone (dot) com and redirected all traffic to the official HRC site. Following the results of last November’s federal elections, today that site redirects traffic to Planned Parenthood’s site.

by a [redacted] n [redacted]

be most important. It should be stated here that I do not conduct this analysis as an attack on anyone associated with the creation of this sign. I do not doubt that those involved have good intentions. However, one's good intentions do not directly influence the effects of one's actions. Moreover, I contend that it is not possible to truly know another's actual intent – only what they claim it to be. Thus, it makes little sense to focus on an individual's or a group's intentions when attempting to discuss the effects of actions.

Short-term memory or a whitewash?

The sign was created late in 2016 by a newly formed activist group in tandem with local resident Jason Maxfield who happens to be a researcher here at Portland State University¹. The group is called Nasty Women Get Shit Done PDX (NWGSDPDX), a name that is taken directly from the infamous reference to Hillary Clinton by her presidential opponent². The image that you see everywhere today was based on a design that Mr. Maxfield initially put together listing social ideals over an altered U.S. flag with rainbow colors. In addition to the English version pictured above, it has been translated into at least 11 other languages.

The NWGSDPDX group was formed directly after and in response to the election results of last November. According to their site, they came together in order to resist the policies "of the new administration." When taken together with the date of formation this means that they were not compelled to organize in opposition to some of those same policies from the previous administration. Lest we forget, Obama deported more people than any other previous administration³; he was perfectly OK giving the go-ahead for bombing no less

than seven Muslim-majority nations⁴; it was Obama who removed single-payer healthcare and its watered-down public option cousin from the metaphorical bargaining table, ultimately delivering the Affordable Care Act's financial boon to health insurance companies⁵; and Obama pledged in his 2013 State of the Union address to speed up permits for the drilling of oil and gas on federal lands⁶. Need I go on? Because I can – the list is long.

It's a truly impressive feat given the present trend of astro-turfed campaigns funded by deep and intentionally obscured pockets that the creation and dissemination of this particular sign appears to be a genuinely grassroots deal. The group makes the sign available for free as a download in addition to selling them at low cost (\$10) in stores around town and on their site for out of towners. The money generated from sales are used for the production of more signs as well as donating relatively large amounts to local non-profits. All of which is to be lauded.

This DIY propaganda⁷ campaign resonated with a LOT of people making it virtually impossible to ignore. The group quickly amassed a large following and their membership neared 800 in less than a month. A friendly explainer article (see footnote 1) written about the group was published in the Oregonian in December. Both a certain bowtie-sporting Congressperson and the current mayor of Portland embrace the group's message, evidenced by their posing with the sign in photos (see the NWGSDPDX site). How is it that such traction and popularity was achieved in such a short time? I argue that it has much to do with the banality of the contents of their message, making use of emotionally evocative language in place of material resistance to any policy or administration. So, what *is* the message?

Cruz, M. (2016, October 20). A Hillary Clinton Supporter Purchases This "Nasty Women" Web Domain In The Most Glorious Response To Donald Trump's Insults. <https://www.bustle.com/articles/190675-a-hillary-clinton-supporter-purchases-this-nasty-women-web-domain-in-the-most-glorious-response-to>

³ Gonzalez, S. (2017, January 17). No One Expected Obama Would Deport More People Than any Other U.S. President. WNYC News. <http://www.wnyc.org/story/no-one-thought-barack-obama-would-deport-more-people-any-other-us-president/>

⁴ Norton, B. (2017, January 10). U.S. Dropped 26,171 Bombs on 7 Muslim-Majority Countries in 2016. Alternet. <http://www.alternet.org/grayzone-project/us-dropped-26171-bombs-7-muslim-countries-2016>

⁵ Horsley, S. (2009, July 24). Single Payer: The Health Care Plan Not On The Table. NPR. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=106969104>

Their choice of words

According to their site, the group's mission is "to support an era of activism, democracy and progressive politics in which [they] advocate for social, financial and environmental justice." This is the equivalent of a linguistic Rorschach test. It conjures a variety of mental images and sentiments, but its particular meaning is indiscernible from the words alone. Without further definitions of what is precisely meant by *activism*, *democracy*, and *justice*, the statement conveys few if any tangible values or actions. None of these abstractions exist outside of specific sociohistorical contexts and as such require further delineation in order to become meaningful. What sorts of activism are supported? Which particular strain of democracy is promoted? How is justice being sought, by and for whom?

These questions do have answers when one moves through other pages on their site: permitted marches, contacting representatives, educating oneself (with many links curated). One theme that emerged in most of the information provided was an opposition to one person, Donald Trump. I am loathe to debate tactics at this time in this space – this is meant to highlight that this discourse is positioned temporarily against the backdrop of one specific administration.

At a basic level, the sign contains quite a few falsehoods, though this is surely by design. From the first line's claim that all people are equal to its closing celebration of diversity, the speakers make assertions that are demonstrably untrue. Of course the Nasty Women understand this – they are neither deluded nor oblivious to the inequities present today in the U.S. Let's look to the sign itself for some clarity.

In our America...

All people are equal
Love wins
Immigrants & refugees are welcome
Disabilities are respected
Women are in charge of their bodies
People & planet are valued over profit
Diversity is celebrated

The possessive pronoun *our* in the opening functions to set apart those who identify with the statements from some another set of people who do not share these values. From the outset, there is at least a *we* with which to identify. Logically, then, there is a group who is not *we* – either or both a *you* or some other *them*. Thus, there is an implied in-group and out-group that the remaining majority of the sign serves to delineate.

From here, a set of claims from the perspective of the in-group *we* are made that describe an America that does not exist today, did not exist before November 8, 2016, and in fact has never existed. Readers of the sign can safely assume that the America described by those seven platitudes is a future iteration and/or an idealized version of America, one in which women's bodies are not subject to oppressive and violent legislation.

If we take an idealized conception to be the grounding upon which the entire message rests, I must ask why it is that *we* are welcoming immigrants and refugees. Don't get me wrong – in today's world of globalized capital, the ongoing brutal exploitation of labor, and the continued destabilization of regions far and wide, I wholeheartedly agree that those who have been forced to emigrate and seek refuge should be welcomed and supported in a myriad of ways. We should neither kid ourselves about nor whitewash the historical causes of immigration and why people seek refuge here and elsewhere, undeniably in large part the result of U.S. foreign and domestic policies, which have not been altered significantly by any administration since the second

⁶ Barack, O. (2013, February 12). State of the Union Address. Address presented at State of the Union, Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/president-barack-obamas-state-union-address-prepared-delivery>

⁷ I do not use this term disparagingly. I'm of the mind that propaganda can and should be used to promote equity.

⁸ A previous version used the familiar 50 stars with stripes to the right and below, with the stripes in rainbow colors, harkening to the pride flag, though arguably still similar to the current U.S. flag.

world war. I would hope that the America idealized on the sign does not create refugees in the first place and that immigration occurs mostly due to desire, and not out of any sort of necessity, economic or otherwise.

Moving from the concrete to the abstract, there are two characteristics in their utopic America that seem especially difficult to see, hear, touch, taste or even smell. First, "love wins." The verb *wins* surely must be considered at the least an implied transitive verb because it implies a competition or pitched battle between oppositional forces in which *something* has been won. This in turn poses several questions. What exactly has love won? How will anyone know whether or not love has won? While we're at it, who or what has love vanquished in its triumphal conquests? I make light here to point out that this statement is quite empty of any material meaning. In order to contend that love wins, one ought to define what it means for love to win anything. I'm truly at a loss for what these two words do other than attempt to evoke an ethereal warm and fuzzy feeling.

Diversity is another one of those incredibly difficult to define constructs – you'll know it when you see it, right? However, if we look back to the in-group set up by the possessive pronoun *our*, we might get an approximation of what this ambiguous diversity entails. Might it mean those who do not look like those who make up the sign's in-group? If it isn't to be defined by what it's not, then diversity too should be more explicitly spelled out, otherwise it can and will be co-opted by those who seek to capitalize on uncritical celebrations of surface-level productions of diversity.

Lastly, I will briefly discuss the choice to use the particular background imagery of the sign – an artistic rendition of the U.S. flag⁸. To my eye, this suggests that a new and equitable America still celebrates land stolen from indigenous people. Thirteen original *colonies* are thought of as a good and necessary history of this nation such that they are represented as 13 stripes on the flag. The last star of the 50 on the current flag represents a state *occupied* and *settled* as a military base (Hawai'i), an act that was and continues to be

resisted by the people living there before the U.S. decided its interests were more important than their sovereignty. It is undeniable that many, many people take issue with the claim that the U.S. flag stands for anything approaching love, equality, or a valuation of people, any people, over profit. To many this flag represents the exact opposite of the sign's stated values and has no place in a re-envisioning of any American project, real or imagined, if it is to be a just America.

Implications

As we are bombarded on all sides with breathless headlines that this administration is uniquely terrible, there is what I think to be a dangerous aspect to the line of thought that "we must do something, anything" to resist it. When that something, anything lacks clarity and critical introspection it runs the risk of serving the interests of those who already occupy positions of power. Part of this occurs through a co-option and inversion of the very language of transformation and resistance. Unclear and muddled terminology begets confusion, which in turn opens space for fear. One need not have graduate degrees in history to know that fear is often exploited by a powerful few to create artificial divisions among the masses of people, actively working against the recognition of commonalities and preventing true solidarity.

I have argued that the "In Our America" sign reinforces a systemically unjust society – the one that exists today – while nominally resisting disconnected and decontextualized expressions of the underlying system, one of which happens to be a Donald Trump presidency. It achieves this through a whitewash of the violent history of the U.S. up to and including the previous administration by positioning themselves primarily in opposition to the current one. Using mostly vague and emotionally evocative language, the sign allows for readers to apply whatever meaning suits their fancy, as opposed to providing clarity of thought and thus recognizable paths toward solidarity. Thus people like Ted Wheeler and Earl Blumenauer do not feel conflicted in aligning their milquetoast politics with the sign's message, and, in my opinion, watering down any semblance of transformative potential that it might have. Furthermore, by connecting it visually to the current U.S. flag, the sign functions to promote feelings of patriotism and nationalism in what is

demonstrably, undeniably an inequitable and divisive nation-state, in effect working against the stated values of equity and harmony.

The Nasty Women's anger and fear of an administration that is in the process of cranking the volume of destruction to 11 on the dial is certainly justifiable and necessary, and of course is shared broadly by many more like-minded people. What I think has been paid far too little attention, though, is the fact that the volume was already at 10, yet no alarm bells seem to have been ringing among vast swaths of the types of people who have been newly mobilized in the past few months. Before jumping in with "something, anything" styled action, I urge you to take time to think about how your action might be useful to that which it is intended to oppose.

i page back !

You can expect to read analyses, editorials, polemic pieces, testimonials, letters to editors, games, jokes, riddles and all sorts of good shit. What we won't do is say that we won't.

If you have ideas for content (however you want to define that); if you have feedback, comments or criticism; if you have confessions or secrets you want to share; if you have love or hate mail, we want to read it, print it, publish it! Send some, all or nothing to samepagezine@gmail.com.

You're our new best friends - message us every five minutes!

Get involved with LAF!

Consider this an invitation to get involved with LAF collective, a new community of practice organically formed through various unofficial conversations during previous terms about different side projects we could work on together, such as this zine, a band, and a YouTube channel, plus lots of other stuff too!

Curious? Have questions or comments? Drop Leah a line at polhemus@pdx.edu to share your ideas, or if you just wanna hang out and see what's the what.

We're a dynamic group of people with various interests, strengths, and experiences who are capable of great things if we put our heads and hands together.

[illegible]